

[IMAGE]

Get Fit for Life in 2017

By Editorial Staff

Is "Get into shape" or a similar mandate front and center on your 2017 New Year's resolution list? If it is, you need a road map for how to get there or you'll end up putting the same resolution on your 2018 list.

- *Health Is Where the Heart Is:* You can't beat consistent cardiovascular exercise when it comes to not only building a healthy heart, but also burning fat and optimizing your metabolism. Before you know it, you'll be leaner, more toned and able to withstand more intense workouts without skipping a beat. Now that's a recipe for yearlong fitness.
- *Keep Your Muscles Guessing:* Your muscles react to repetitive stimuli just like we do - after a certain point, they get bored. In physiological terms, that boredom manifests as lack of response to your "same old, same old" workouts. To prevent this, mix up your workouts every few weeks, engaging different muscles (you probably didn't even know you had) and provoking them to respond by getting firmer, tighter and more fit.
- *Don't Fear the Break:* Burnout is the No. 1 reason many people discontinue exercise; they either push themselves too hard for too long, or do the same workout over and over until they lose interest. You can avoid both and keep going strong by taking a break every so often to rest, recharge and prepare for your next fitness stage. Your muscles need time to recover and repair (between workouts and over time), so give them (and yourself) some much-deserved time off every few months. A week away from the gym will do wonders for your mental and physical health.
- *You Are What You Eat:* Let's finish this conversation with the often-forgotten element of true fitness: nutrition. Perhaps it's so often overlooked (or ignored) because for many of us, heading to the gym seems easier than eating broccoli, brown rice and salmon instead of a burger with fries. But face it, without good nutrition, you're not giving your body the fuel it needs to work out, the building blocks it needs to develop lean muscle –essentially, the tools it needs to get fit and stay fit.

So this time, don't commit to a year of fitness that falls flat somewhere around April or May; commit to a *lifetime* of fitness beginning in 2017. If you need help getting started, talk to your doctor for advice, and [click here](#) for more tips to help you stay the course.

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